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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 000285

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR AND AF/S

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [HA](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: MBEKI WANTS PREVAL TO REACH OUT TO ARISTIDE

REF: A. 06 PORT-AU-PRINCE 2417

[1](#)B. 06 PRETORIA 3437

[1](#)C. 06 PRETORIA 3195

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Perry Ball. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) South African President Thabo Mbeki wants Haitian President Rene Preval to "reach out" to former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, according to Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Director Pieter Swanepoel. Swanepoel told PolOff January 16 that there has been no contact between Preval and Aristide since the Haitian elections in February [1](#)2006. In South Africa's view, communication between the two is "important" and could help calm tensions in Haiti, particularly if Preval announced that he had talked to Aristide.

[1](#)2. (C) Contact between Aristide and Preval could also begin to "pave the way" for Aristide's return to the region, Swanepoel added. He emphasized that South Africa is not setting any firm timetables for Aristide's departure, but stated that Aristide should not become a "permanent fixture" in South Africa. Mbeki and other DFA officials have passed this message to Preval through third parties, such as Dominican Republic ForMin Carlos Morales Troncoso, who visited South Africa in October 2006. Most recently, Swanepoel spoke with Bahamian Education Minister Alfred Sears, who was in Pretoria January 15, about Preval reaching out to Aristide. Sears also met Aristide.

[1](#)3. (C) Swanepoel was aware of Aristide's Christmas message (Ref A), and thought that the tone of the message reflected Aristide's increasing "frustration" with his situation. A call from Preval could help calm Aristide, Swanepoel suggested.

[1](#)4. (C) South Africa continues to be interested in playing a role in Haiti, Swanepoel said. Close Mbeki ally and Minister of Transport Jeff Radebe attended the Haiti donor conference in Madrid in November, where he met with Haitian Prime Minister Alexis. Radebe and Alexis discussed protocol issues (such as the SAG pending request to accredit their ambassador in Kingston to Haiti), as well as possible South African assistance to Haiti. Alexis highlighted three areas of

possible South African assistance: agriculture, social services, and culture. DFA plans to hold a conference in South Africa in 2007 with civil society, Caribbean officials, and other experts to examine what contribution South Africa could make in Haiti.

15. (C) University of South Africa (UNISA) professor and Embassy contact Dirk Koetze told PolOffs January 22 that Aristide is not visible on the UNISA campus. Aristide's office is separate from the rest of the faculty, and he is always surrounded by SAG-funded security guards. Koetze said there was some initial unhappiness among the faculty when Aristide arrived, but the issue has faded ("people forget Aristide is here"). Aristide's wife Mildred, in contrast, is "quite visible" in her role as "Senior Lecturer/Researcher" at UNISA's Centre for African Renaissance Studies (CARS), Koetze added.
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